

Howie Newman releases new CD



MELROSE SINGER-SONGWRITER Howie Newman (center), flanked by his son, Keith, and daughter, Jen.

MELROSE – Melrose singer-songwriter Howie Newman has released a new CD and, like his five previous albums, it contains mostly humorous material. There are, however, some very personal and touching songs as well.

"I think it's a good mix," said Newman (www.howienewman.com), who has performed at the Melrose Summer Stroll and Four Corners events, and hosted the Music in Melrose Coffeehouse from 2006-11. "I tend to write songs from personal experience, things people understand. Sometimes it's funny and sometimes it's not."

The album, *When You're Happy*, explores the various facets of everyday life – marriage, parallel parking, old cars, parenthood and money – with a mostly whimsical twist. It's equal parts country-rock, jazz, pop, swing, blues and Americana, with tight arrangements and pleasing vocal harmonies.

Local residents can borrow the CD at the Melrose Public Library.

"The thing I like most about this album is the variety of musical styles," said Newman. "Each song needed something different and I was fortunate enough to work with some great musicians who understood what I was trying to do."

One of the backing musicians was Tim Ray, a Malden resident, who played piano on three tracks. A professor at the Berklee College of

Music, Ray has performed with Lyle Lovett, Bonnie Raitt, Aretha Franklin and many others.

"Tim is a fantastic piano player and was a pleasure to work with," noted Newman. "He did three distinctly different songs – swing, country-rock and blues – and shined on all of them."

Also appearing on the CD were Newman's children, Keith and Jen. Keith, who appeared with his father at the Melrose Summer Stroll a few years ago, played flute on one track and sang backup vocals on two others. Jen did backup vocals on two songs.

"Having my kids be a major part of the album makes it extra special. They're both living far away and we don't get to play together that much anymore."

Newman's song, "Our Kids Aren't Kids Anymore" describes the magical journey of watching his children grow up.

"I really like my dad's music and was happy to be a part of the album," said Jen. "Someday, when I have kids, I'll be able to show them I was on a CD that was actually played on the radio."

Keith, who does improv and sketch comedy part-time in LA, appreciates the humor. "All the songs are great but I especially like the funny ones," he said. "They're all about real life, too, so it's easy to relate to them."

For further information, including music samples, visit www.howienewman.com/happy.